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ABSTRACT

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BEYOND COOKERY AND COSMETIC: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWEE INSTRUCTION

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Drawing primarily upon empirical research which examines how interviewee communication impacts on interviewer hiring decision in the employment interview, this report examines that research with the intention of developing instructional recommendations as well as identifying more pervasive, instructional issues. Research related to (1) pre-interview communication, particularly resume materials, (2) nonverbal communication and (3) verbal communication during the interview is reviewed and interpreted in terms of instructional recommendations. The report concludes with identification and discussion of major issues related to the instruction of employment interviewees which, arguably, need further examination by interviewing researchers, educators, and students.

BEYOND COOKERY AND COSMETIC: RECOMMENDATIONS AND ISSUES IN EMPLOYMENT INTERVIEWEE INSTRUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Employment interview research has been frequently reviewed over the past fifty years (Arvey and Campion, 1982; Dipboye, 1992; Goodall and Goodall, 1982; Harris, 1989; Jablin and McComb, 1984; Mayfield, 1964; Schmitt, 1976; Ulrich and Trumbo, 1965; Wagner, 1949; Wright, 1969). The vast majority of the research reviewed is designed to improve interviewer (ER) preparation, interview facilitation, and ultimately, interviewee (EE) evaluation, with comparatively fewer sources focusing upon improving EE communication, especially via instructional recommendations. The bulk of this research is also micro-analytic, addressing specific variables associated with the hiring process and seeking to establish causal relationships between or among significant variables which allegedly influence ER decision making before, during, or after the interview itself. Moreover, given the diversity of purpose, design, methodology, and outcome which characterizes this rather focused research, it is difficult to offer many unassailable claims regarding the influence of EE communication variables on ER decision making. In turn, establishing guidelines for EE communication instruction is equally problematic.

In brief, the research is often reported, is occasionally reviewed, but is seldom distilled in a way that discusses how it might be used in the interviewing classroom, especially regarding EE communication instruction. Of course, several popular texts address employment interviewing (e.g., Hamilton, 1993; O'Hair & Friedrich, 1992; Stewart & Cash, 1991; Wilson & Goodall, 1991). But given their larger purposes, it is not surprising that their presentations of

guidelines for EEs are truncated and that virtually no discussions of research or larger issues surrounding employment interviews are developed. And, when the press of class time as well as the clientele's desire for formulaic answers are factored in, it is not surprising that discussion of topics and issues is likely to be minimized if not completely obscured.

In turn, and given the above characterization of the research, texts, and classrooms, the purposes of this paper are (1) to review research addressing how EE communication related variables impact upon ER decision with an eye toward instructional recommendations, and (2) to identify issues which, hopefully, challenge conventional principles and practices related to the education and preparation of EEs for communication before and during the employment interview. Below, research involving (a) pre-interview communication by EEs as well as both (b) nonverbal and (c) verbal communication of EEs during the interview is examined followed by instructional recommendations. Finally, and by way of conclusion, substantive issues related to what is/ought to be taught regarding EE communication in the employment interview are presented.

PRE-INTERVIEW DECISION VARIABLES: THE RESUME

Although there are several EE communication variables which might influence ER decision making prior to an interview, the resume is clearly among the most frequently researched. The empirical findings addressing the resume can be divided into three main categories: form and content, standards, and relative influence.

Form and Content. Most employment interviewing educators are well aware of the plethora of research findings available regarding what to include in a resume, what order to list such inclusions, and what format in which to cast

such materials (e.g., Campion, 1978; Hough, 1984; Hutchinson, 1992; Kinicki & Lockwood, 1985); Rasmussen, 1984; Tschirigi, 1973). The primary assumptions guiding such research appear to be that it is appropriate and necessary to construct a resume which influences (perhaps more than it informs) ER decision making, and that some items and orderings of resume data may be more influential on ER decision making than others. Of course, there is also conflicting research on any number of items, especially regarding their relative, persuasive efficacy. For example, one conflict involves the relative importance of scholastic standing/achievement versus work experience (Hakel, Dobmeyer, & Dunnette, 1970; Singer & Bruhns, 1991) on ER decision making. While Hakel, Dobmeyer, and Dunnette (1970) stressed the importance of scholastic standing, in their study Singer & Bruhns (1991) noted that professional managers were consistently more influenced by work experience versus academic accomplishment, and that managers may actually be negatively influenced by high academic accomplishment when it is also accompanied by a record of poor work experience.

Recommendation. Whether confirmatory or conflicting, the point of such research for the classroom ought to be lecture and discussion about the multiple functions (e.g., self assessment, information exchange, persuasion) served by the very process of resume writing. Instruction should also center on the value (and ethics) of certain inclusions and orderings for applicants in general as well as for particular resumes. To the extent such discussions are truncated or ignored in favor of uncritical acceptance of generic prescriptions for content and form, the utility of such research is undermined. And, to the extent that resume instruction becomes more exclusively addressed to impression management

techniques, the value of resume construction as an educational process may be obscured in favor of the singular goal of creating a promotional product.

Standards. Given resumes and other EE generated communication, another question which is addressed in the research literature is whether an ER is looking for someone who meets ideal standards for a position or someone who best mirrors the ER. While research regarding an ER's application of either ideal or self based standards has focused upon the interview itself, the initial application of such standards logically extrapolates to the first information presented to an ER, usually a resume and cover letter. Stevens (1981) contended that the ER may well be looking for a mirror image of self in attempting to assess attributes of a given candidate. Daly, Richmond, and Leth (1979) also discovered that selectors evaluate applicants who are similar to them in a more positive manner. Wexley and Nemeroff (1974) claim that biographical similarity between an ER and EE favorably and significantly influences the former's evaluation of the latter. However, Dalessio and Imada (1984) indicate in their research that the self-applicant match may not apply as well to predicting hiring decisions when the ER is at a supervisory level. Instead, the self-applicant match may be a more appropriate predictor when the ER is at the same job level as the candidate. Dalessio and Imada conclude that while both standards are relevant, the ideal-applicant match may appear to have the greater influence on the hiring decisions of ERs.

Recommendation. Dalessio and Imada's research is instructive. While an ER's job level may be known, the EE most likely will not have prior knowledge of the ER's evaluative standards. In turn, it seems sensible that discussion of what might be the ideal knowledge, skill, and ability (KSA's) for a given position would be an appropriate assignment for any EE but especially EEs who are first

embarking upon a particular career. Such an assignment can be more than an exercise in self assessment. In effect, the process of resume construction ought to be about career exploration, self assessment, and the match between the two. Resume development instruction which only re-inforces the resume as an attention- getting and ultimately, audience-gaining activity, is short sighted and, possibly, less persuasive. Ironically, through detailed attention to the "ideal" the future EE may get a much better assessment of what is "real" regarding future career possibilities and satisfaction.

Relative Influence. The research related to EE communication influence prior to the interview also addresses the relative influence of pre-interview materials versus actual interview impressions. In a early study on the impact of pre-interview assessments, Springbett (1958) found that as high as 88 percent of the post-interview evaluations of candidates could be predicted successfully from pre-interview evaluations of the EEs based on applications submitted. Tucker and Rowe (1979) also found that the more favorable the pre-interview references were on a given EE, the more favorable the post-interview evaluations were on that EE. Rasmussen (1984), working specifically with resumes, found that resumes seemed to make a greater impression on eventual hiring decisions than actual interviews. In contrast, Parsons and Liden (1984) found job interview impressions to be more influential than such resume entries as prior work history, scholastic achievement, and extracurricular activities. Kinicki, Lockwood, Hom, and Griffeth (1990) also found that at both aggregate and individual levels of analysis, impressions of EEs formed during the interview influenced managers' hiring decisions more than did resume entries. But Kinicki, et al. (1990), also observed that trait ascriptions based on actual interviews may well be reflecting prior inferences drawn from resumes and other pre-interview

materials. Of course, impressions formed during the interview may also mediate the effects that prior resume cues may have on hiring decisions. Clearly, both pre-interview materials and impressions made during the actual interview are influential, but the pre-interview materials, and especially the resume, as logically prior influences, can shape how the ER conducts the interview (e.g., interest, enthusiasm), and in turn, how the EE will respond during the interview (Dipboye, 1982).

Recommendation. Given the above, it is (a) presumed that initial contact by way of applications, reference letters, and resumes is important in securing an eventual interview, and (b) arguable from the research that such initial material makes a significant first impression which may influence later assessment experiences, such as the interview. In turn, while pre-interview materials may be more or less influential than verbal and nonverbal communication during the interview, classroom educators need to remind EEs that pre-interview impressions may also influence assessment during and after an interview. Indeed, based upon self-fulfilling prophecy literature, Dipboye (1982) and Powell (1986) provide argument for the view that the more favorable the information on the EE known before the interview, the more favorable will be evaluation and final decision after the interview. Moreover, positive pre-interview impressions also encourage ERs to attribute past successes of EEs to internal causes, e.g., effort and ability, and to attribute past failures to external causes, e.g. bad luck (Tucker and Rowe, 1979). In brief, it may well be that the successful interview is to a significant extent achieved before the interview ever takes place.

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION DECISION VARIABLES

As a prelude to discussing research on the influence of nonverbal communication of EEs on ER decision making during the interview, four initial reminders are in order. First, although research findings are mixed (Buckley & Eder, 1988; Hueglie & Tschirgi, 1975; Springbett, 1958), there is some indication that ERs may make decisions to hire early in the interview. Second, there is some evidence that early impressions are more important than factual information on an ER's hiring decisions (Schmitt, 1976). Third, Farr and York (1975) reported that when one final rating is to be made, and when information in the interview sequence is equally favorable from start to finish, that information appearing early (primacy effect) influences the final judgement about the candidate more than does the information presented later (recency effect). Fourth, research also suggests that negative first impressions are more impactful than positive ones especially when the negative occurs in the first minutes of the interview (Rowe, 1989; Springbett, 1958).

The influence of first impressions on later decision making may not be tied exclusively to nonverbal factors. Also, the need to be accountable for one's decision may mitigate against the perseverance of first impressions (Tetlock, 1983). Nevertheless, it would be sensible to assume that nonverbal communication, whether judged positively or negatively, would play a significant role in initial impressions, and would, in turn, have a contributing influence on later hiring decisions. Below, research addressing both dynamic and static nonverbal cues occurring during the interview and allegedly having impact on later hiring decisions is reviewed and assessed in terms of instructional guidelines.

Dynamic nonverbal cues. Perhaps the most influential bodily movement in interviews is eye contact. Kleinke (1986) reviewed research which examined various functions of eye gazing, including, providing information, regulating talk, expressing regard, asserting social control, and facilitating goal achievement, all of which also impact upon communication in the employment interview. Tessler and Sushelsky (1978) also related medium and high eye contact to higher social status, with the latter construct related to suitability for jobs demanding self-confidence. Research (e.g., Edinger & Patterson, 1983; Forbes & Jackson, 1980; Gifford, Ng, & Wilkinson, 1985; Imada & Hakel, 1977; Parsons & Liden, 1984; Washburn & Hakel, 1973; Wexley, Fugita, & Malone, 1975; Young & Beir, 1977) also identifies other potentially influential nonverbal cues such as smiling, head shaking and nodding, gesturing, proximity, and paralinguistic cues such as articulation and pausing. Conversely, eye avoidance, eye wandering, neutral face expression and less smiling, and head held static may be seen by ERs as indicative of a lack of interest and enthusiasm for the position (Forbes & Jackson, 1980). Of course, continuous eye contact, inappropriate (or nervous) smiles, excessive nodding and gesturing and frequent vocal nonfluencies would presumably be dysfunctional as well.

Recommendation. Interestingly, such allegedly unfavorable nonverbal behavior as eye avoidance may suggest a need for greater awareness and sensitivity to nonverbal communication in employment interviewing across cultures (Fugita, Wexley & Hillary, 1974). How ERs from one culture may interpret the nonverbal dynamic cues of EEs from another culture would seem to deserve more attention in employment interviewing research (and presumably in some classrooms). Beyond the need for EE instruction to be more responsive to the increasingly diverse culture which is defining today's employment market,

there is the continuing and familiar question regarding the relative influence of such cues on ER decision making. While the nonverbal ban (dynamic and static cues together) may constitute the majority of messages sent (Knapp and Hall, 1992), the issue of the relative influence of verbal communication (e.g., Gifford, et al., 1985) versus nonverbal communication continues and is certainly worth any class time devoted to it.

Static nonverbal cues. Although favorable/unfavorable inferences drawn from dynamic nonverbal cues as noted above do appear to impact significantly on ER assessment and can presumably be somewhat managed by an EE, it is clear that other nonverbal cues such as physical attractiveness and what is termed, stereotypical job appearance, may be less easily or effectively managed by a given EE. However, since factors such as grooming and dress can be managed and are unavoidably connected with overall judgements of attractiveness and suitability, it seems appropriate to review the literature associated with attractiveness and stereotypical job appearance in conjunction with dress and grooming. Moreover, the research also suggests that such factors may have differential impact based upon several variables, most notably sex of the applicant.

Although physical attractiveness is unavoidably related to such elements as dress (Francis & Evans, 1988; Riggio & Throckmorton, 1988) and cosmetics (Cox & Glick, 1986) as well as other nonverbal cues, studies (Cann, Siefgried, & Pearce, 1981; Cash, Gillen, & Burns, 1977; Cash & Kilcullen, 1985; Dipboye, Arvey, & Terpstra, 1977; Dipboye, Fromkin, & Wiback, 1975; Heliman & Saruwatari, 1979; Kinicki & Lockwood, 1985) which have asked respondents to judge physical attractiveness have found that attractive people, regardless of sex, tend to be judged more favorably than unattractive people. However,

attractive males were found to get higher rankings than attractive females. For example, Heliman & Saruwatari (1979) found that while attractive males seem to be ranked higher across all job types, such was not the case for females, in effect, attractive females were more favorably ranked for clerical jobs but not for managerial positions.

The would-be female manager may not only be potentially disadvantaged by attractiveness. There is also research (Forsythe, 1990; Forsythe, Drake, & Cox, 1985) which supports the conclusion that masculinity of a female's attire favorably enhances hiring decisions. Using the same women dressed in four different outfits, Forsythe, et al. (1985) found that evaluators gave more favorable ratings to those females dressed in blazers or short belted jackets or tailored suits than when the same women dressed in a beige dress with a small rounded collar, and gathered, long sleeves. Moreover, as Cash (1985) discovered, grooming by women which reflects what was termed, a managerial style, e.g., shorter, simpler hairstyles, hair away from face and lacking adornments, moderate facial cosmetics, tailored blouses and jackets, simple gold jewelry, etc. was favored by raters, especially male raters. Similar conclusions about clothing choice and grooming, in effect, a preference for "conservative styles" is reported by Jenkins and Atkins (1990). Of course, dress, grooming and overall presentational style may be significantly altered if the female applicant should somehow know in advance that her interviewer is a male chauvinist (von Baeyer, Sherk, & Zanna, 1981). In either case, while much has been written in the popular literature on dress for success (e.g., Malloy, 1988), the point to be made here is simply that clothing and grooming cues do influence hiring decisions and that this may be particularly important for women applying for management positions who, while otherwise qualified, may

nevertheless need to consider making significant personal choices regarding dress and grooming .

Of course, whether such dress and grooming cues can offset potentially negative evaluations for otherwise attractive women applicants is a question for additional research. While not addressing that specific question, there is some research which looks at the comparative influence of attractiveness and dress. When physical attractiveness and appropriateness of dress are combined, research indicates that attractive EEs still retain an advantage over unattractive EEs. For example, Bardack and McAndrew (1985) found that an unattractive person who dressed well only slightly improved chances for being hired whereas an attractive person who also dressed appropriately improved chances for being hired significantly more. Indeed, Baradack and McAndrew (1985) suggest that there is some evidence that even attractive but inappropriately dressed EEs were hired more often than unattractive EEs who dressed appropriately.

However, physical attractiveness may not always be more influential than that appearance which fits a stereotypical view of a job, for example, a librarian. In a study by Snyder, Bersheid, and Matwychuk (1988), the influence of attractiveness was measured against the variable of high versus low self monitor ERs. High self monitors tend to be the type of person called for in a given situation and are more sensitive and responsive to relational concerns whereas low self monitors are more concerned with behaving in ways which are consistent with their own enduring values. In their study, Snyder, et al. (1988) found that high self monitors tend to place greater weight on information about physical attractiveness and also tend to choose people who have what they termed job appropriate appearance (e.g., stereotypic view of what would be appropriate dress and grooming for a librarian) over people with more suitable

personalities. The authors also found that when asked to choose between physically attractive EEs with inappropriate job appearance versus EEs who were less attractive but had job appropriate appearance, the high self monitors were more likely to choose a person with the appropriate (stereotypic) appearance over a physically attractive candidate for a given position. In effect, while attractive EEs, especially males, may have more of an advantage regarding influence on hiring decisions, it may be that an EE who "looks the part" will have an advantage for given positions over an otherwise attractive rival.

Of course, a critical variable in much of the above research is whether or not the position in question is generally understood to include attractiveness as a job relevant criterion. Beehr and Gilmore (1982) found that while attractiveness does influence hiring decisions for positions where attractiveness is job relevant, attractive people are not hired only or even mainly because of their appearance, even for attractiveness-relevant positions. In turn, the authors concluded that attractiveness "is not an advantage for applicants for jobs in which attractiveness is not relevant, and being unattractive appears never to be an advantage" (p. 615). While such a finding might mitigate the influence of attractiveness, in a later study, Gilmore, Beehr, and Love (1986) found when compared to sex of the applicant, type of rater (professional versus student), and type of job (attractiveness-relevant, e.g., personnel interviewer, versus attractiveness-less relevant, e.g., personnel records), that attractiveness had the broadest influence on employment decisions. In addition to impacting upon hiring decisions, the authors also found that the data in their study suggested a relationship between attractiveness and ER judgements of (a) appropriateness of personality for the position and (b) expectations for better job performance. In

effect, while attractiveness is obviously not the only criterion upon which decisions to hire may be made, attractiveness may be especially beneficial for attractiveness-relevant positions, may be more influential than other variables such as applicant sex, and may exert broad influence on several judgements such as personality fit for the job and expectations for future performance.

Finally, and perhaps as a comfort to those who see the above findings as unfortunate distractions in the task of EE assessment, Baron (1986) reports that excessive use of too many nonverbal cues, for example, the twin use of several positive nonverbal bodily movements and a grooming aid (perfume), resulted in a negative assessment (i.e., manipulativeness) of the female applicants by both male and female raters. The study also noted that applicant use of just one or the other tactic resulted in more favorable ratings. Parsons and Liden (1984) also provide some hope for all those who may not be able to dress or even look the part as well as others but are more fluent. In their study, articulation was one of the most significantly influential variables on ratings of qualifications. In turn, clothing worn was at or near the bottom of the influence list. The conclusion may be that ERs know that clothing is easier to change than speech patterns.

Recommendation. While the static cue of physical attractiveness clearly favors those judged as more attractive, such may not be the case for females applying for managerial positions. Interview appropriate dress may help attractive EEs and to an extent, less attractive EEs. But perhaps the most significant questions for the classroom are whether female EEs are (or even ought to be) willing to downplay attractiveness and/or to dress and groom in a way which reflects a "masculine" or "conservative" or "managerial" style. On the one hand women who follow the advice suggested by such research findings

may more favorably influence hiring decisions, especially among male ERs, unless, of course, such males are also chauvinistic. On the other hand, women who follow the advice suggested through the above research need to ask whether they can do so in a way which is consistent with self image and personal integrity. Finally, those who better mirror a physical stereotype associated with a given position, may do even better than attractive people who do not mirror the stereotype when hiring decisions are made by a high self monitoring ER. Instructors might here raise the question whether it is appropriate to accent, tactfully and discreetly, how one "looks the part," and then if appropriate, how such accenting might be accomplished.

VERBAL COMMUNICATION DECISION VARIABLES

Although nonverbal communication is often accorded prominence as related to ER decision making, a study by Gifford et al. (1985) raises an interesting point. In studying the influence of applicant nonverbal communication behavior on ER hiring judgment, they concluded that "40 to 50 % of the variance is unaccounted for by the nonverbal cues examined in this study. Obviously verbal behavior also plays an important role in job interviewing" (p. 735). An earlier study by Hollandsworth, Kazelskis, Stevens, and Dressel (1979) supports this observation. In their study, the authors conclude that "appropriateness of content" had the greatest influence on ER decision making.

Defining Answer Content. In a study by Harlan, Kerr and Kerr (1977), favorable content was partially defined in that they observed that it was better for an EE to emphasize motivator factors (e.g., concern for professional growth) and to de-emphasize hygiene factors (e.g., concern for pay). Ugbah and Majors (1992) identified several influential communication factors which impact on ER decision making, in effect: resourcefulness, written credentials, support for

arguments, social attributes, comportment, and style. The authors found that younger (versus older) recruiters were more impressed with verbal content offering clear support for arguments, that is, evidence such as illustrations and statistics. The authors also discussed social attributes (i.e., attitude, motivation, personality characteristics) as an influential factor and noted that applicants would be well advised to identifying with employers' interests through expression of thoughtfully considered career goals and should attempt to present an image of competence and dynamism. Hollandsworth, Glazeski, and Dressel (1978) also observe that when EEs respond appropriately to the actual questions asked, when they speak at length, and when the speech is intelligible, they are rated more favorably. The authors go on to suggest that EEs be trained to pause before answering, focus on key words in ERs' questions, and organize answers before speaking and; that such efforts relate to improved judgements of speech fluency in interview settings. In turn, in an earlier study, Hollandsworth, Dressel, and Stevens (1977) found that speech fluency was associated with favorable hiring decisions.

Relative Influence. Clearly verbal and nonverbal communication cues are mutually influential. For example, Rasmussen (1984) points out that high levels of nonverbal have more positive effect than low levels but only when verbal content is also good. Rasmussen also notes that when verbal communication is poor, nonverbal effects seem to be reversed: "Perhaps one's nonverbal behavior serves to augment or enhance the magnitude, but not the direction, of the effects of verbal content" (p. 554). And in Hollandsworth, et al. (1979) they list (1) appropriate verbal content, as most influential but also list in order several nonverbal cues: (2) fluency of speech, (3) composure, (4) body posture, (5) eye contact, (6) voice level, and (7) personal appearance.

Recommendation. Given the above, it is clear that both verbal and nonverbal communication of interviewees individually, together, and reciprocally, influence how an ER assesses an EE. Based upon the above research on EE verbal communication, a reasonable instructional agenda would be to: (1) encourage EEs to anticipate the kind of questions likely to be asked; (2) mentally rehearse (but not memorize) content appropriate for anticipated questions, for example, motivator versus hygiene factors; (3) be ready to provide clear and defensible support for claims likely to be put forth; (4) assess potential answers to likely questions in terms of how they may meet assumed employer needs and interests; and when actually answering, (5) focus upon key terms in questions and (6) attempt to organize answers. In effect, for those who teach/train interviewees, research that identifies EE verbal communication during the interview as impactful on ER decision making should be appreciated if only because the emphasis in the popular literature and in the empirical literature has been upon the significance and alleged influence of both dynamic and static nonverbal cues. Recognizing the importance of both verbal and nonverbal communication as well as their reciprocal influence on each other can only enhance the classroom study of the employment interview understood as a communication transaction.

CONCLUSION

This paper has only attended to the unidirectional impact of EE communication on interviewer decision making, and once again it should be underscored that because of the differences in purpose, design, and method in the research reviewed, it is difficult to draw generalizations about the influence of single variables or to provide any confident assessment of how such variables collectively account for the variance in ER decision making. Until divergent

conclusions can be better reconciled through more sophisticated research designs, it seems prudent to provide instruction which acknowledges the multiplicity of allegedly significant influences but which also avoids rank ordering such variables in terms of how they may account for the variance related to interviewer decision making. Moreover, while such empirical findings allow for any number of points for discussion and debate, there are larger, overarching issues which should also define classroom instruction on EE communication instruction. Two such issues are identified and briefly discussed below.

Purpose. Given the frequently acknowledged problems with predictive validity in employment interviewing (e.g., Dipboye, 1989; Kacmar, Ratcliff, and Ferris, 1989), one might question whether the interview does serve any meaningful purpose at all. However, issues of validity aside, employers and applicants continue to participate in employment interviews and seemingly each has a purpose(s) for doing so. In preparing EEs for the interview, it is clear that the preponderant focus in both the popular and professional literature, and presumably, in the classroom, is knowledge and skill regarding what is most likely to influence a given ER with respect to decisions regarding employability and ultimately, hireability. In effect, the purpose of the selection interview from the perspective of the EE has clearly been to learn influence strategies which will maximize chances of gaining an interview and subsequently, obtaining an offer as a result of one's presentation of self in that interview. In turn, it is likely that most interviewing instructors draw upon the advice in the literature which emphasizes awareness and use of such influence strategies, for example, the use of self-focused impression management strategies versus other-focused impression management strategies (e.g., Kacmar, Delery, and Ferris, 1992).

Now while some instructors may well question the efficacy of particular strategies and hopefully all instructors discuss such advice and research findings as probability generalizations rather than as statements of fact, the fundamental issue here is whether or not EE instruction in employment interviewing ought to be only or exclusively about influence strategies. Jablin and McComb (1984) raised this basic issue in questioning whether additional research on employment interviewing viewed as a persuasive communication event (e.g., Einhorn, 1981) should be encouraged. Noting several objectives to the interview-as-persuasion approach, the authors then claimed that "From our perspective . . . it is in both the organization's and the applicant's best interests to view the interview as an **information-sharing**, expectation-matching communication event, rather than one in which both parties are trying to persuade each other that they are something they are not" (Jablin & McComb, 1984, p. 154).

More recently, Ralston, Kirkwood, and Pickett (1992) essentially raised the same issue and argued for the need for researchers and practitioners to reframe the sense of purpose traditionally attached to the employment interview. The authors argue the value of approaching the interview as information and expectation sharing versus persuasion. Claiming the shift to be "paradigmatic" the authors examine the failings of the employment interview on several counts for both employers and applicants and then, applying Jurgen Habermas's four criteria for the Ideal Speech Situation, provide an approach for reconstructing the employment interview.

While it might be argued that learning awareness and application of influence strategies does not preclude the realization of Habermas's Ideal Speech Situation, what is important is that Ralston, Kirkwood, & Pickett (1992)

as well Jablin and McComb (1984) have raised a fundamental issue of purpose which also has significant pedagogical implications. For example, in presenting purpose as an issue involving persuasion or information sharing or both, every strategy and tactic currently presented in employment interviewing instruction might be assessed not just in terms of its probable persuasiveness but, instead (or also), in terms of how it may promote or inhibit information exchange and clarification of expectations. Thus, when talking about impression management strategies such as ingratiation, instructors might also raise the question about the relationship of authentic self disclosure to such ingratiation. In turn, instead of the interviewing class being a place where one mainly learns how to enact communication strategies or mimic behaviors designed to produce some alleged effect on an ER, the class could become a place where such strategies and behaviors might be examined, challenged, modified, or perhaps discarded. In any case, while acknowledging the pressures of class time as well as students who only want to learn "what to say" and "what to wear," discussion of the fundamental purpose(s) of the employment interview, and in turn, the evaluation of that purpose(s) through assessment of various communication strategies and behaviors, seems necessary if one wishes to avoid having the class become (or remain) little more than a skill-mill for impression management.

Presentation. In addition to the fundamental issue of purpose is the equally pervasive and unavoidably ethical issue of presentational choice making. Whether developing a resume, deciding on dress and grooming for an interview, or responding to ER questions during the interview, the EE is constantly faced with choices which go beyond mere decisions of what information to present or how to convey one's knowledge, skills, and abilities most persuasively. In effect, beyond the cookery and cosmetic of the interview,

are questions such as what is appropriate and accurate self disclosure? For instance, Fletcher (1992) raises the point of what degree of self disclosure is legitimate for an EE? The more open the EE is the more likely that some negative information will be a part of the more positive material. In effect, how does an aspiring EE balance an expectation for complete honesty with information likely to have a negative impact?

The interview classroom might also be a place to discuss such ethically imbued choices such as to what extent EE answers should be guided by perceived high employer expectations versus actual applicant abilities? In effect, is the EE able and/or willing to distinguish an "acceptable" answer from an "accurate" one? How much should an individual EE be guided by research findings when it comes to making decisions about personal appearance? Although allegedly influential (Snyder, et al., 1988), is it ethical to attempt to "look the part," in effect, to accent a stereotypical job appearance, when preparing for an interview? Or, what is to be said about the clash between professional goals and personal preferences, especially in the case of an attractive female EE who likes "feminine" dress but who is competing in a market which expects "masculine" attire?

Of course, what is important here is not definitive answers so much as meaningful dialogue, in effect, that research findings be discussed in the literature, the texts, and the classroom with more attention to such issues as purpose and presentation, in effect, encouraging EEs to be more reflective when approaching the employment interview process. To the extent that considerations related to such issues as purpose and presentation are eschewed, instructors run the risk of training EEs who are ultimately less well

prepared for the employment search, the actual interview, and perhaps, the job itself.

In discussing applicant training Webster (1982) provides an illustration of what EE instruction without attention to such issues might produce. Noting that EEs can be taught to improve their communication skills and mannerisms he observed, "This was clear to me when I recommended an applicant who, within a few months, was fired for doing a minimum of work, faking reports, padding expense accounts and reporting drunk to head office. He accepted his dismissal with the comment: `I can always put it over those ... psychologists'" (p. 117).

Apparently even experts in employment interviewing can be fooled. Obviously, those who instruct EEs need to encourage them to first and foremost learn to assess their own qualifications and apply for positions for which they are best suited, and then, to work on communication skills which will best convey those attributes. Instructors also need to approach EE instruction through more extensive discussion of issues and perhaps give less attention to strategies. To do otherwise is to encourage the glib at the expense of the qualified.

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